(c) to (e) Earth work and bridge work have been taken up. The work is being progressed as per availability of resources. No target has been fixed so far for completing the project.

Bookstalls at Railway Stations

4013. SHRI THANGA TAMIL SELVAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to answer to Starred Question 185 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 1st December, 2000 and state the action taken by Government regarding removal of discriminations among bookstalls contractors at railway stations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) All the discriminations among bookstalls contractors at railway stations have been removed *vide* Bookstall Policy issued in June, 2004 by the Ministry of Railways.

FDI in Steel Plants in Orissa

4014. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Foreign Direct Investment offers have lately been invited for the 12 million tonnes integrated steel plants in Orissa;

(b) whether Pohang Steel Company of South Korea has offered an FDI of $12.4 billion, if so, on what terms; and

(c) whether their terms were not acceptable to the Orissa Government if so, on what grounds?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) As per information made available by Government of Orissa, no such offers have been invited.

(b) Pohang Steel Company of South Korea has evinced interest for setting up of a port based 12 miilion tones per annum integrated steel plant in Orissa with an investment of about Rs. 40,000 crores.

(c) No final decision has so far been taken by the Government of Orissa on the proposal of Pohang Steel Company of South Korea.

Customs duty on steel

4015. SHRI MURLI DEORA:
SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the steel industry has asked Government to increase the customs duty on seconds and defectives to 40 per cent from 20 per cent;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) view taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Indian Steel Alliance, which represents the main steel products (except TISCO) has requested for restoration of 40% customs duty on seconds and defectives.

(c) The customs duty on prime non-alloy steel and prime alloy steel is 5% and 10% respectively. A reasonable duty differential of 15% with prime non-alloy steel and 10% with prime alloy steel is maintained even after the duty on seconds and defectives has been lowered from 40% to 20%. Thereforer in the present circumstances the Government does not consider it necessary to restore customs duty on seconds and defectives to 40%.

Employment *vis-a-vis* exploration of Iron Ore

† 4016. SHRI ISAM SINGH: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that proper exploration of Iron ore in Orissa can provide employment to about 2 crore persons; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.